

Waterloo

- The Battle of Waterloo took place in Belgium on June 18, 1815
- It marked the final defeat of French military leader and emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), who conquered much of continental Europe in the early 19th century.
- Napoleon rose through the ranks of the French army during the French Revolution (1789-1799), seized control of the French government in 1799 and became emperor in 1804.
- Through a series of wars, he expanded his empire across western and central Europe. However, a disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812, coupled with other defeats, led to his abdication and exile in 1814. He returned to France in 1815 and briefly resumed power.
- June 18, Napoleon led his army of some 72,000 troops against the 68,000-man British army, which had taken up a position south of Brussels near the village of Waterloo.
- In a critical blunder, Napoleon waited until midday to give the command to attack in order to let the waterlogged ground dry after the previous night's rainstorm. The delay gave the opposing remaining troops, who, by some accounts, numbered more than 30,000, time to march to Waterloo and join the battle later that day.
- Although Napoleon's troops mounted a strong attack against the British, the arrival of the Prussians turned the tide against the French. The French emperor's outnumbered army retreated in chaos. By some estimates, the French suffered more than 33,000 casualties (including dead, wounded or taken prisoner), while British and Prussian casualties numbered more than 22,000.
- Reportedly fatigued and in poor health during the Belgian campaign, Napoleon committed tactical errors and acted indecisively. He also was blamed for appointing inadequate commanders.
- Ultimately, the Battle of Waterloo marked the end of Napoleon's storied military career.
- He reportedly rode away from the battle in tears.
- On June 22, 1815, Napoleon once again abdicated. That October, he was exiled to the remote, British-held island of Saint Helena, in the South Atlantic Ocean.
 - He died there on May 5, 1821, at age 51, most likely from stomach cancer. Napoleon was buried on the island
 - However, in 1840, his remains were returned to France and entombed in a crypt at Les Invalides in Paris, where other French military leaders are interred.